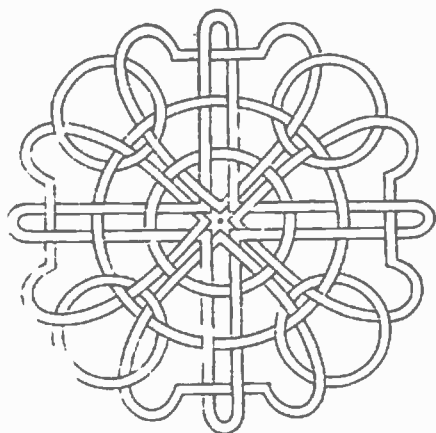


## GRAVESTONE AT ISLAY.



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THE accompanying sketch is taken from a simple slab in the old burying ground in the Island of Islay, Argyshire. There is no inscription, or any characters upon the stone, and the device itself is very rudely sculptured. It is a curious arrangement of four hearts, four rings (quarry, wedding?), a cross, and two circles, all blended one in the other, without confusion.

FOWNHOPE CHURCH, HEREFORDSHIRE.  
HEREFORD ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY.

At a recent *soirée* given by this society, Dr. Strong, of Ross, read a paper on Fownhope Church. In the course of it the writer said,—Many hundred years has this temple mouldered and decayed in neglect and contempt, but the day has at length dawned when the taste and intelligence, the munificence and the skill, the piety or the pride, that presided over its erection and added roof to roof for its rural worshippers, shall be again understood and appreciated, and even emulated. The size of the fabric is sufficiently considerable to arrest attention, being no less than 110 feet long in the clear, and how a pile so large and so irregular came to be erected we have no written record, but there are stones about the edifice which, rightly interpreted, will throw a clear light upon its history. The most ancient, or at least the most authentically striking piece in the whole building, is the scriptural tympanum in the western wall, of which a cast was taken by the very Rev. the Dean of Hereford, and exhibited at the first *soirée* for the present season.

There can be no question but this stone once filled up the semi-circular part of a Norman portal—a peculiarity of this style, the origin of which is unknown. Some have supposed that the early architects, not having as yet had much experience of the principle and resistance of the arch, thought it prudent to strengthen their work by imposing a stone between the door-jambs: hence this support is commonly called the "impost-stone." It thus became a sort of compromise between the Greek and the Roman doorway. Considerable pains have recently been taken to preserve this relic of the Norman era, but no trace of the arch or of the side-jambs remains either here or in any other part of the walls. And thus is one of several reasons for concluding that the present church has been rebuilt. The early erection may even have been standing here prior to the conquest, like Bridgeton Church, which is in the same style, and which, upon the authority of the *Liber Llandecensis*, was consecrated two years before the battle of Hastings.

There appears to have been a custom prevailing among the architects who succeeded the Normans of preserving the doorways of those

churches they rebuilt or altered, for doorways such as this in the Anglo-Norman style still exist in many churches, the other portions of which were erected at a much later period. The reason for this may have proceeded from a laudable wish to retain some visible remembrance of the piety of the founder, by whom the original work was designed. Some impaired bases and capitals of Norman pillars, of a size corresponding with the doorway, were, upon the authority of an antiquary who has long resided near the locality, to be seen some years since, as well as some fragments of very early Norman work under the singing-gallery. The two capitals are now preserved and used as flower-pots at the Vicarage-house door.

An investigation of this unpretending fabric will reveal no less than five styles of architecture, marking as many equivalent epochs in our history, and lighting up in an unexpected manner, and from an unpromising quarter, some of the proceedings of the so-called dark ages. The Norman and semi-Norman styles are very decided; the succeeding styles, viz., the early English, the Decorated, and the Perpendicular, no less so, though not so highly prized by the antiquary.

The style then of the impost-stone, or tympanum, leads to the conclusion that it formed part of the doorway to a small Norman chapel of the size of those at Killeck or Shobdon, which stood upon the site of the present chancel. It might have been in existence about a century when the addition to the fabric of the present tower was made: this is 25 feet square, and exhibits particularly well the state of transition from the circular or Norman to the pointed or early English style. Thus, in the second story of the tower may be observed a lancet-headed couplet included in a pointed arch; while in the story immediately above is a circular window divided into two lights by a central pillar with regular bases and capitals, flanked by columns wrought in the jambs with corresponding mouldings, presenting a valuable specimen of early Norman workmanship. The intermixture of the Norman and early English styles in this fine tower, satisfactorily establishes the date of its erection; for this semi-Norman style originated about 1150, and is known to have continued in vogue until near the close of the century, when the round arch was finally abandoned. The tower, therefore, was undoubtedly built between 1250 and 1200; and as the noble family of Berkeley had these lands assigned to them soon after the Conquest, we may very reasonably conclude that it was erected at their expense. The two handsome towers of Exeter Cathedral, which in the twelfth century constituted the western entrance, but now form the transepts, exhibit precisely the same transition or semi-Norman style; and there are documents extant to show that they were constructed within the half century above named.

The present spire, we may be sure, was

never contemplated by the Norman architect. It is framed of timber, and seems to be covered by shingles, which, from the peculiar way in which they are split (along the veins of the wood), are found to be much better adapted to resist the weather than ordinary-sawn planks. It may be of the same date, or earlier than the Court-house already mentioned. The Norman work finishes with the characteristic zig-zag ornament along the parapet, and the entire edifice, as it looked in the year 1200, must have been a very fine specimen of its class.

In the thirteenth century the Fownhope estates passed by marriage from the Berkeleys to the Chandos family, in the reign of Henry the Third, and the event would almost seem to be commemorated by the very liberal addition to the fabric, of the present nave. That it was constructed in this century we conclude from the graceful early English entrance on the north side, whose slender banded pillars form a striking contrast to the massiveness of such parts of the structure as are of more remote date.

## ST. JAMES'S CHURCH, CONGLETON.

THIS church was consecrated last week. We take the following particulars from the *Chester Courier*. The church, which consists of a nave, aisles, and chancel, is built of stone from the quarries of Congleton Edge. The pillars and arches, internally, are formed of the white stone from the quarries of Ollington, near Uttoxeter. The roofs of the church and chancel are high pitched, and are covered with green Westmoreland slate. The chancel has a triple lancet window at the eastern end, and single lancets at the side. On the north side of the nave there is a porch. The nave and aisles are 77 feet long by 50 wide; the chancel 30 feet long by 17 wide. Mr. Samuel Farrah, of Odd Rode, was the principal contractor, and Mr. Edward Massey, of Lawton, executed the wood work. There is a bell gable at the western end of the nave. Internally, the roof of the nave is open, showing the timbers which support it. At the east end of the chancel is a stained-glass window, by Mr. Wailes, of Newcastle. The working people of St. James's district first commenced a subscription for this window, and what they were not able to raise was bountifully made up by a committee of ladies in Congleton and the neighbourhood, to whose exertions the church owes many of its many costly decorations. The window contains ten scenes from our Saviour's life. Within the chancel is a spacious pavement of encaustic tiles, a considerable portion of which are the gift of Mr. Minton. The pulpit is of carved oak, and an ancient one. It was purchased at a sale in Staffordshire, some time ago by the ladies' committee. In shape it is a hexagon. The panels are all finely carved. Two coronas suspended by rods of blue and gold from the roof of the nave light the church for evening service. They are of light iron and brass work, of Gothic tracery and design, in character with the church, and are painted partly blue, partly scarlet, with some gilding. The seats are all open, and will accommodate 700 persons. Mr. James Trubshaw was the architect.

**BUILDERS' SOCIETY.**—We had the pleasure of attending the fifteenth anniversary dinner of this society, on the 8th inst., held at the Freemasons' Tavern, when Mr. Thomas Piper presided, and Mr. W. Cubitt, Mr. Field (President of Institution of Civil Engineers), Mr. W. Herbert (who, although he has given up building, has not given up the builders), Mr. Haward, Alderman Lawrence, Mr. Henry Lee (president of the society), and others, made observations, well deserving note, and would have it, too, did we not feel that the meeting was considered to be rather for the encouragement of friendly feelings than for public expression of opinions. Mr. Piper discharged his duty admirably,—as we should have said even if he had not, in the name of the society, also alluded to **THE BUILDER** in terms which, in conjunction with what was said recently by the Foremen's Institution, show a consideration for us, on the part of both masters and men, that is peculiarly gratifying.